

WYCOMBE
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

●

ANNUAL REPORT

of the
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
and the
SANITARY INSPECTORS

1949

●

F. H. M. DUMMER, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H. (Lond.)
Medical Officer of Health.

J. P. PERRY, M.R. San.I., M.S.I.A.
Chief Sanitary Inspector:

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Wycombe Rural District Council

1949

Chairman :

Rev. C. MARTIN.

Vice-Chairman :

Mr. L. F. LUNNON.

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

at 1st May, 1949.

Chairman :

Mr. W. G. Britnell

The Chairman of the Council.
The Vice-Chairman of the Council.
The Chairman of the Finance Committee.
The Chairman of the Public Works Committee.

Mr. E. V. Belton.	Mrs. F. H. Pitcher.
Mr. J. Bowler.	Mr. E. G. Pusey.
Mrs. A. M. Conoley.	Mrs. M. Roach.
Miss M. M. J. Couper.	Mr. S. J. Roberts.
Mr. G. B. Lee.	Miss M. Towerton.
Mrs. K. M. McCue.	Mrs. D. M. Walker.
Mrs. G. H. M. R. McKelvie.	Mr. S. C. Wood.
Mr. P. C. Mogford.	Mrs. M. G. Woollerton.
Mr. F. G. Moreton.	

STAFF :

Medical Officer of Health:

F. H. M. DUMMER, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H. (Lond.)

Chief Sanitary Inspector :

J. P. PERRY, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A., Meat Certificate.

Sanitary Inspectors:

D. J. SULLIVAN, M.S.I.A.

T. LAWSON, M.S.I.A.

Trainee Assistant Sanitary Inspector:

P. R. H. BRADLEY.

Clerk:

Miss R. M. SPENCER.

Wycombe Rural District Council

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health 1949

Public Health Department,
28, High Street,
High Wycombe.

July, 1950.

To the Chairman and members of Wycombe Rural District Council:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my second Annual Report as your Medical Officer of Health.

The vital statistics for the year show some very satisfactory features. The death rate 8.9 per thousand, is the lowest ever recorded for your district. The infant mortality rate at 23.8 per 1,000 related births is very substantially below the figure of 32 for England and Wales, and is the smallest rate in the long period of 1898-1949.

The tuberculosis mortality index of 0.35 compares favourably with the national figure of 0.45, although locally it represents an increase on last year's figure.

There were 629 live births last year in your area, representing a birth rate of 15.9 per thousand of the estimated population. Although the high birth rate of the immediate post-war years has not been maintained, this latest rate is above the 1930-40 decade.

For the third year in succession, no deaths occurred by causes directly related to child-birth.

These cold mathematical facts, transposed into everyday application, mean that the population of your district live longer, produce healthier babies and seem better equipped to escape the more severe ravages of debilitating disease.

As everywhere in these islands, the problem of the care of old people looms large in our day to day duties. One of the most important documents of post-war years was published in June, 1949. It was the "Report of the Royal Commission on Population." Among its fascinating pages will be found one estimate which must inevitably affect the future policy in public services—not least, housing requirements—of even the smallest authorities. It was pointed out that between 1871 and 1947 the number of people over 65 in Great Britain increased fourfold. The proportion of people over 65 rose from 4.8 per cent. to 10.4 per cent. "Even if future mortality rates show no reduction on present levels, the number of people over 65 may be expected to grow from 5.0 millions in 1947 to 7.3 millions in 1977." We are, of course, reaching a stage when this "weighting" of population by old people, is preventing an overall reduction in mortality rates, despite medical advances.

Quite apart from the economic problem of having an increasing proportion of population over working age, there is the growing question of public care of persons unable through old age to look after themselves, and the necessity for public provision in the matter of housing.

We build 3 and maybe 4 bedroomed houses for young couples—and we hope the particular houses, rightly so, will be fully occupied by that family! In 20-25 years the children have left the home. The middle-aged couple remain—tenant; with too much room on their hands, anxious for a smaller place. We must provide for this contingency now and build a larger proportion of smaller houses, homes suitable for the ageing group, units that can be adequately maintained and enjoyed by old folks.

I hope the day will never come when we have "old folks communities" set aside for the worn-out, segregated from the busy world, remote from children's voices.

Hostels do not provide the answer for the old. New places take some getting used to. The uprooting of old ties, the taking down of the pictures that have hung on the same walls for 40 years "do something" to the old. The specialist would say "this old person has not adjusted herself to her new environment," but the old lady expresses herself much better and with sounder common sense "I hate this place because it isn't mine. I can't go to bed when I want, arise when I want—or if I can, I feel I shouldn't. I miss my garden, my neighbours, my cat; I miss buying my own groceries and choosing what I want."

That is the problem of the hostel. With the best intentions in the world it cannot substitute for home. But in our anxiety to do the best for old people, we must not lose sight of the essential need for "supervision" of old people who may be quite incapable of looking after themselves.

This is a particularly difficult group to deal with and we should acknowledge that in these modern days of staff shortages, economy drives, and institutional facilities, domiciliary care is not good enough. This is where the Hostel or Home comes into its own.

The old lady who cannot be trusted to light fires, but will have a fire or must have a fire; the old couple who keep countless cats but cannot manage domestic cleanliness; the bedridden old man who has no relations to take any interest—all these require the good offices of an institution. The problem is to get a vacancy. This is one of the most difficult things which the public health service faces today, and it involves a policy of long term planning. We have not the number of Homes we require and the list for admission is steadily growing.

It is right that I should record in any Report of this kind the substantial progress which you, as a Council, have made towards the housing of your population. Up to December 31st, 1949, 611 post-war houses were completed and a further 217 were under construction. 143 dwellings were completed during the year. This is a very praiseworthy achievement and one in which you can take a ready pride. The demand is great and there still exists a very real "hard core" of needy applicants.

You will, by now, be aware of the concern of my Department that re-housing should go hand-in-hand with better housing.

As you will see from the Chief Sanitary Inspector's housing survey, there are many substandard houses known to your authority. Unhappily it is not yet possible to demolish at a rate commensurate with new building. Our alternative then is to concentrate on those houses which are capable of repair and so ensure that an adequate standard of fitness is being maintained. In a rural district, where so many properties are of the old "cottage" type, with primitive sanitary amenities and cess-pool drainage, this is a major task in itself. But it is one which, as you are aware from committee reports, goes on continuously and is one of the corner stones of a preventive health service.

During the year, representation has been made to you for an extension of water mains to individual or grouped properties. Special requests have been made for the hamlets of Meadle and Owlswick. The work has been delayed, due, I understand, to shortage of equipment and the long delay in delivery.

During the year, I have submitted special reports to the Public Health Committee on the following subjects:—

- (a) Milk supplies and Tuberculosis
- (b) Laboratory Facilities
- (c) Rural water supplies
- (d) Wrapping of bread
- (e) Report on Royal Sanitary Institute Congress

- (f) B.C.G. Vaccination
- (g) Housing and Health
- (h) Investigation of Scarlet Fever outbreak
- (i) Administrative procedures—infected milk supplies
- (j) Control of flyborne diseases
- (k) Health education
- (l) Diphtheria Immunisation
- (m) Vaccination and Small-pox

The number of new cases of tuberculosis has remained for a second year at the figure of 35, but the number of deaths has increased in the year from 8 to 14, giving a tuberculosis mortality index figure of 0.35 compared with 0.21 in 1948.

The figures shown below are from the decennial periods 1900-1940 + 1949.

TUBERCULOSIS MORTALITY INDEX 1900-1949

1900 ...	.99	1930 ...	.93
1910 ...	.70+	1940 ...	.51
1920 ...	.78	1949 ...	.35

+ Phthisis only.

For a real appreciation of the change in mortality one has to turn to the national figures. 100 years ago, 3,963 persons out of every million died of tuberculosis. In 1920 1,127 and in 1948 505 per million.

What has brought about this improvement?

First and foremost, I would place improved conditions and standards of living. Secondly, the work of doctors in the field in recognising or suspecting tuberculosis in its earliest stages, coupled with the growth of diagnostic clinics and sanatorium treatment of early cases.

This vital early treatment is in jeopardy today. Shortage of beds — or more accurately, shortage of staffed beds — will make a farce of the best diagnostic and preventive measures at our command. This is a national problem — and a national responsibility.

But there is one aspect of the problem which can be partially solved locally. If sanatoria must discharge patients to continue supervision and rest at home, we should be able to ensure that the living conditions to which such a patient returns, are the best procurable. This is an "essential housing need" from both an individual and a public health viewpoint. I am glad to be able to say that your Council has recognised this "need" and has provided for it in selecting tenants for consideration in housing allocations. This consideration has resulted, in the vast majority of cases, in the prompt allocation of a house.

There have been no cases of food poisoning reported in the current year.

The period under review has seen a marked increase in the number of visits paid to food premises and you will appreciate that the constant vigilance of your Sanitary Inspectors in this routine, undramatic but nevertheless vital, aspect of public health service, contributes very largely to this satisfactory state. Basically, it is by the "education" of trades people in hygienic standards and the demanding public for "clean food," that the best preventive measures can be effected. Such empirical measures are, in my opinion, more productive of results than by-laws. Indeed, it is a sorry reflection on this "enlightened age" that coercive methods need to be contemplated at all.

During the year, 8 cases of acute poliomyelitis and 2 of poliomyelitis have been notified. From the "Table of Infectious Diseases"

you will see that the age groups attacked by this disease, belie the common name of "Infantile Paralysis" for this infection.

The cleanest of homes, as far as we know, are just as likely to be attacked. The main control measure at our disposal is the prompt isolation of the patient. Multiple family cases do occasionally occur, but they are rare.

There is one point to which attention should be drawn, if not to prevent the disease, at least to nullify its more severe results--namely, the prevention of over-tiredness in children. We do know that in those cases where strenuous exercise or exhaustive play immediately preceded the symptoms, the disease tends to be more severe. Since the height of poliomyelitis incidence more or less coincides with the holiday period, the tendency is for parents to allow children that "extra hour or two." So the vicious circle of increased activity and tiredness is completed by the addition of few resting hours; in general terms, there is a tendency towards "lower resistance." But the soil is unproductive without the seeds. Our problem is the investigation of the seeds, and to that, at present, there is no answer.

Again we find measles, with 326 cases, heading the list of notifiable diseases. The main onslaught fell on the age group 5-10, the reason being presumably the wider mixing of infants and young children by school attendance. The disease was mild and no unusual features presented themselves.

Scarlet fever, with 39 cases, displaced whooping cough from the second place. The variety was of a mild nature, many of the cases showing little or no signs of an eruption. The virulence of this disease has undergone a considerable change in the last one or two decades, and today it is unusual for scarlet fever to be a very severe illness.

For the second year, no actual case of diphtheria occurred, a fact which establishes very firmly the success of our anti-diphtheria measures. It is to be hoped that we are not far from the day when parents will accept immunisation for their children in the same natural way as they do, for example, acknowledge the necessity for education. The decision is a parental responsibility, and to ignore it will place a child in a position of unwarranted danger. Throughout your district, medical officers of schools and infant welfare clinics have continued their efforts in this direction.

In conclusion, I wish to express my warm appreciation of the good work carried out by my staff in the Public Health Department.

I am, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

F. H. M. DUMMER,

Medical Officer of Health.

STATISTICS

Area of Wycombe Rural District (in acres)	71,232
Resident population (1931 census)	27,495
Registrar-General's estimate of population (mid 1949)	39,540
No. of inhabited houses on rate book (31st March, 1949)	10,941
Rateable Value	£219,318
Estimated Product of Penny Rate	£842

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR 1949

		BIRTHS		
LIVE BIRTHS		Male	Female	Totals.
Legitimate		291	308	599
Illegitimate		16	14	30
	Totals	307	322	629
STILL BIRTHS:				
Legitimate		7	4	11
Illegitimate		1	—	1
	Totals	8	4	12
The Birth Rate per 1,000 estimated population				15.9
" " " " population of England and Wales				16.7
The Still Birth Rate per 1,000 estimated population				0.30
" " " " population of England and Wales ...				0.39

DEATHS

All causes: Males 185. Females 167 Total 352.				
The Death Rate per 1,000 estimated population				8.9
" " " " population of England and Wales				11.7
Tuberculosis Death Rate, England and Wales				0.45
" " " " Wycombe Rural District				0.35
Deaths from Puerperal causes:				
(a) Puerperal sepsis			0	
(b) Other puerperal causes			0	

INFANT MORTALITY

15 infants died under the age of one year.

Legitimate	8	7	15
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Totals	8	7	15

This represents a mortality rate of 23.8 per 1,000 related births, compared with 32 as a general figure for England and Wales.

The deaths for 1949 were attributable as follows:—

Premature births	3
Congenital malformations }	
Birth Injuries	4
Infant Disease	
Undefined	8

CANCER

	Males	Females	Total
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	31	31	62
Yearly comparison of cancer deaths:—			
1949	62		
1948	65		
1947	69		
1946	66		
1945	71		

The following organs were affected:—

Buccal cavity and Oesophagus	1
Uterus	1
Stomach and Duodenum	13
Breast	6
All other sites	41
	—
	62
	—

TABLE OF DEATHS (All Causes)

	Males	Females	Total.
1. Typhoid and Para-typhoid	—	—	—
2. Cerebro-Spinal Fever	—	—	—
3. Scarlet Fever	—	—	—
4. Whooping Cough	—	—	—
5. Diphtheria	—	—	—
6. Tuberculosis of the Respiratory System	8	5	13
7. Other Forms of Tuberculosis	—	1	1
8. Syphilitic Discases	—	—	—
9. Influenza	2	3	5
10. Measles	—	—	—
11. Acute poliomyelitis and encephalitis	1	—	1
12. Acute Inf. encephalitis	—	1	1
13. Cancer of buccal cavity and oesophagus	1	—	1
14. Cancer of stomach and duodenum ...	8	5	13
15. Cancer of uterus	—	1	1
16. Cancer of breast	—	6	6
17. Cancer of all other sites	22	19	41
18. Diabetes	—	4	4
19. Intra-cranial vascular lesions	22	29	51
20. Heart Diseases	55	43	98
21. Other Diseases of the Circulatory System	7	7	14
22. Bronchitis	10	8	18
23. Pneumonia	6	12	18
24. Other respiratory diseases	2	1	3
25. Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	—	—	—
26. Diarrhoea under 2 years	1	—	1
27. Appendicitis	—	1	1
28. Other digestive diseases	7	5	12
29. Nephritis	3	2	5
30. Puerperal and post-abortion sepsis	—	—	—
31. Other Maternal causes	—	—	—
32. Premature Births	3	—	3
33. Congenital Malformations.....	1	3	4
Birth Injuries			
Infant Diseases			
34. Suicide	5	—	5
35. Road Traffic Accidents	5	—	5
36. Other Violent Causes	3	1	4
37. All other causes	13	10	23

Table 1. Notifiable Diseases (other than Tuberculosis), 1949

	Total Case Notified.	Age Periods.						
		0-1	1-3	3-5	5-10	10-15	15-25	25-+
Smallpox	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	39	1	—	6	25	6	1	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Typhoid and Para-Typhoid ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cerebro-Spinal Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia	12	—	1	—	2	—	1	8
Erysipelas	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Encephalitis	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Acute Poliomyelitis	8	—	—	3	1	—	1	3
Measles	326	8	53	83	151	19	8	4
Whooping Cough	38	2	12	8	15	—	—	1
Food Poisoning	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dysentery	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Vaccinia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	429	11	66	100	194	26	11	21

TUBERCULOSIS

Table 2. New cases and Mortality during the year 1949

The following particulars relate to new cases of tuberculosis and of all the deaths from the disease during the year.

Age Periods.		New Cases.				Deaths.			
		Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.		Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	...	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
1	...	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
5	...	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
10	...	—	—	2	2	—	—	—	—
15	...	2	2	—	1	—	—	—	—
25	...	4	5	2	—	1	2	—	—
35	...	3	2	—	—	1	1	—	—
45	...	2	1	1	—	3	—	—	—
55	...	2	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
65 and upwards	...	2	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
Totals	...	15	11	7	3	8	5	—	1

WATER SUPPLIES

Recurrent water sampling has been carried out throughout the year and in the main, apart from individual contamination of shallow wells supplying individual properties, the analyses shewed the supply to be of an adequate and wholesome nature.

The following is a typical example of a water analysis report:—

Chemical results in parts per Million

Appearance—clear and bright	Turbidity (Silica Scale)—Nil
Colour (Hazen)—Nil.	Odour—Nil.
Reaction pH.—7.2.	Free Carbon Dioxide—20
Electricity Conductivity at 20°C—445	Total Solids, dried at 180°C—300
Chlorine in Chlorides—11	Alkalinity as Calcium Carbonate—225
Hardness: Total—255 Carbonate (Temp.) 225	Non-carbonate (pcrm) 30.
Nitrogen in Nitrates—3.4	Nitrogen in Nitrates—Absent
Free Ammonia—0.000	Oxygen absorbed in 4 hours at 27°C 0.000
Albuminoid Ammonia—0.000	Residual Chlorine—Nil.
Metals—Absent	

Bacteriological Results

	1 day at 37°C	2 days at 37°C.	3 days at 20°C.
No of Colonies developing on Agar per cc. or ml. in	0	0	0
Presumptive Coliform Reaction	Present in	—	Absent from 100 ml.
Bact. coli	Present in	—	Absent from 100 ml.
Cl. welchi Reaction	Present in	—	Absent from 100 ml.

This sample is clear and bright in appearance, neutral in reaction and free from iron and other metals. The water is hard in character but not to an excessive degree and it contains no excess of mineral or saline constituents in solution. It is of the highest standard of organic and bacterial purity. These results are very satisfactory and consistent with a pure and wholesome water suitable for public supply purposes.

Details of Water Supply

Parish.	Supplied direct by pipes into houses.		Supplied by Standpipes.	
	No. of Houses.	Popula- tion.	No. of Houses.	Popula- tion.
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton	390	1,337	19	67
Bradenham	19	67	8	28
Ellesborough	186	656	—	—
Fawley	50	177	—	—
Fingest	385	1,360	—	—
Hambleton	278	981	—	—
Hampden, Great and Little	88	311	—	—
Hedsor	21	74	—	—
Hughenden	1035	3,654	44	155
Ibstone	55	194	—	—
Kimble Great and Little	168	685	—	—
Lacey Green	246	868	—	—
Longwick-cum-Ilmer	72	254	—	—
Marlow, Great	328	1,158	—	—
Marlow, Little	203	717	—	—
Medmenham	44	155	—	—
Radnage	107	378	7	25
Risborough, Princes	939	3,315	75	265
Stokenchurch	541	1,910	15	53
Turville	57	201	—	—
Wooburn	1,427	5,037	—	—
Wycombe, Chepping, Rural	1,524	5,380	44	155
West Wycombe Rural	490	1,730	12	42
Totals	8,653	28,599	224	750

AMBULANCE SERVICES

The ambulance arrangements pertinent to your area, made under proposals supplied by the County Council in accordance with Section 27 of the National Health Service Act, (1946) and approved by the Ministry of Health, are those which were already in existence before the appointed day.

(a) For Infectious Cases:—

A ambulance is supplied by the Wycombe and District Joint Hospital Board for service in the Borough of High Wycombe, and the Urban Districts of Beaconsfield and Marlow, and the Rural District of Wycombe. The facilities are adequate for the areas served.

(b) For Non-Infectious Cases:—

Ambulances are kept at Bourne End and Princes Risborough and are also available from the adjoining Borough of High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Henley-on-Thames and the Urban District of Marlow.

I am indebted to your Surveyor for the following table:—

CESSPOOL, EMPTYING, 1949

Parish	No. of gallons of sewage removed.
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton	730,980
Bradenham	25,575
Ellesborough	467,325
Fawley	19,500
Fingest	1,682,315
Hampden, Great and Little	54,750
Hughenden	4,644,440
Hambleton	301,550
Ibstone	229,780
Kimble, Great and Little	347,850
Lacey Green	717,990
Longwick-cum-Ilmer	341,175
Marlow, Great	561,180
Marlow, Little	127,100
Medmenham	103,200
Radnage	306,210
Risborough, Princes	146,255
Stokenchurch	2,257,680
Turville	224,130
Wooburn & Hedsor	3,888,560
Wycombe, Chepping, Rural	3,535,205
West Wycombe, Rural	812,800
Total	21,525,550

Sanitary Inspector's Report, 1949

Public Health Department,
28, High Street,
High Wycombe.

To the Chairman and Members of the Wycombe Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Herewith I beg to submit a Summary of the work carried out by the Department in the year 1949.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

J. P. PERRY,

Chief Sanitary Inspector.

GENERAL

Inspections and visits under the Housing Act, 1936, and the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	1,385
Re-inspections	913
Inspections under the Public Health Act, 1936	298
Re-inspections	299
Number of interviews with owners in respect of Housing Repairs, Plans and Specifications for reconditioning dwelling houses	381

WORKS EXECUTED AS A RESULT OF NOTICES

Dwelling house roofs repaired	39
" " eaves gutters repaired or provided where missing ...	27
" " brickwork to walls, chimney stacks, etc., made good	21
" " woodwork to windows repaired	19
" " interior plaster made good	26
" " windows made to open for the purpose of ventilation	9
" " woodwork to stairs, floors, etc., made good	23
" " dampness remedied	34
" " interior walls cleansed and re-decorated	15
" " cooking arrangements, etc., rendered serviceable	12
" " outbuildings repaired	7
Miscellaneous Works	24
Dwelling house drains cleansed, ventilated or made sound	17
" " new drainage system provided	21
" " new cesspools provided	24
E.C.'s or privies converted to W.C.'s	10
Closets repaired	6
New W.C.'s constructed	10
House sinks provided	15
Sanitary ashbins provided	14
Accumulation nuisances abated	7
Animal nuisances abated	6
Yards paved and drained	9
Houses connected to public water mains	48

SUMMARY OF INFORMAL NOTICES AND RESULTS OF SAME

Article 27 of the Sanitary Officer's (Outside London) Regulations, 1935 and of the Sanitary Officer's Order, 1936, in relation to Inspections and Notices, etc.

Acts and Sections under which Notices were served.	No. of Informal Notices and Letters.	Complied with.	Not complied with.
P.H.A., 1936, Sec. 92 (1) (a)	85	82	3
" " " 259	5	5	—
" " " 92 (1) (b)	6	6	—
" " " 92 (1) (c)	2	2	—
" " " 39	24	21	3
" " " 44-45	16	14	2
" " " 75	14	14	—
" " " 56	7	7	—
" " " 141	—	—	—
" " " 39 (1) (b)	17	12	5
" " " 39 (1) (d)	4	4	—
" " " 138	49	40	9
Housing Acts and Regulations	108	59	49
Milk and Dairies Order, 1926	61	54	7
Totals	289	211	78

Summary of Statutory Notices and Results of Same

Acts and Sections under which Notices were served.	No. of Notices	Com- plied with.	Work in progress at end of year.	Notices not complied with.	Prosecu- tions.
P.H.A., 1936, Sec. 92 (1) (a) ...	3	3	—	—	—
" " " 259	—	—	—	—	—
" " " 92 (1) (b) ...	—	—	—	—	—
" " " 92 (1) (c) ...	—	—	—	—	—
" " " 39	—	—	—	—	—
" " " 44-45	2	2	—	—	—
" " " 75	—	—	—	—	—
" " " 56	—	—	—	—	—
" " " 141	—	—	—	—	—
" " " 39 (1) (b) ...	5	4	1	—	—
" " " 39 (1) (d) ...	3	3	—	—	—
" " " 138	7	5	2	—	—
Housing Act, 1936, Sec. 9	9	1	—	8	—
" " " " 10	—	—	—	—	—
" " " " 11	39	21	5	13	—
" " " " 13	—	—	—	—	—
" " " " 16	—	—	—	—	—
Milk and Dairies Order, 1926 ...	—	—	—	—	—
Totals ...	56	35	8	13	—

VARIOUS

Number of visits made to infected houses	89
" " investigations, schools, etc., re infectious cases	104
" " houses disinfected	93
" " houses disinfested	8
" " inspections of moveable dwellings	142
" " inspections re Infestation Order, 1943	121

HOUSING

The Hobhouse Rural Housing Survey Sub-Committee of the Central Advisory Committee, published their report on the post-war situation in 1944 and on their recommendation the Rural Housing Survey was initiated.

The survey, (which includes houses to a maximum rateable value of £18 in your Council's area) was completed in the present year. As indicated in the 1948 report the information obtained is of inestimable value, provides important data from which your Council can assess housing needs, and is an indication of the extent of one aspect of the housing problem. The following information has been extracted from the survey:—

Subject	Totals	Percentage of houses
Estimated number of houses in District December, 1949	11,186	
Number of houses included in survey	7,749	
Classification:—		
Category 1. Houses fit in all respects	2,836	36.60
" 2. Houses with Minor defects	2,772	35.78
" 3. Houses requiring structural alteration or repair	1,071	13.82
" 4. Houses suitable for recon- ditioning under the Hous- ing (Rural Workers) Acts	134	1.73
" 5. Houses unfit for human habitation and not repair- able at a reasonable cost	936	12.08
Overcrowded houses (legal standard)	152	1.96

Water Supply:		
Main supply—piped indoors	5,872	75.77
Main supply—standpipe	494	6.375
Private supplies (wells)—piped indoors	359	4.634
Private supplies (wells)—not piped indoors	218	2.814
Private supplies (rain water tank)	723	9.344
No proper supply	83	1.0719
Drainage:		
To sewer	489	6.3119
To cesspools	5,801	74.87
To drainage systems other than cesspools	364	4.690
No proper provisions	1,095	14.14
Sanitary Accommodation:		
Water closets	4,930	63.62
Pail closets	2,508	32.57
Earth closets	50	.645
Elsan closets	245	3.164
No proper provision	16	.206
Other data:		
Sinks provided	7,048	90.97
Washing coppers	6,978	90.05
Fixed bath	3,987	51.46
Artificial lighting (gas or electricity) ...	6,441	83.32
Rent levels:		
Owner-Occupiers	3,887	50.16
Up to 3/- p.w.	54	7.32
3/1d. to 5/- p.w.	362	4.65
5/1 to 7/6d. p.w.	487	6.28
7/7d. to 10/- p.w.	719	9.27
10/1d. to 12/- p.w.	495	6.38
12/1d. to 15/- p.w.	800	10.32
15/1d. to 19/11d. p.w.	747	9.64
£1 and over	198	2.55

These facts leave no room for complacency. World War II started with too few good houses and far too many insanitary ones. Today there are too few houses of any type, good, bad or indifferent. The slum and the obsolescent house, in spite of their attendant evils and lack of amenities, are in as much demand today as at any time.

At the end of World War II emphasis was on new building work, the repair of existing houses being of secondary importance. Recently, recognition has been given to the necessity for securing the improvement of existing housing accommodation, as evidenced by the provisions of the Housing Act, 1949. Despite this new legislation and whilst planners, architects and builders are working at full speed on the construction of new houses and new towns, reconditioning work is held in check by force of circumstances. Anything in the nature of a slum clearance scheme is obviously out of the question, and will remain so for several years until the acute housing shortage has been reduced. Patching and re-patching of houses, many of which are fit only for demolition, must continue.

Implementation of the survey with respect to slum clearance and re-conditioning work has to be related to such factors as lack of housing accommodation, shortage of labour and material, rent control, high building costs, reluctance of builders to undertake repairs in connection with the lower rated houses when more profitable work can be found elsewhere,

licensing restrictions and defects in the statutes themselves. Such defects include lack of housing standards enforceable by law, and the absence of a precise definition as to what the legislature describes as a "reasonable expense." This equivocal expression has much perturbed local authorities and particularly their sanitary officers, since it was introduced in 1930. Administration of the Housing Act with respect to repair work has therefore been rendered difficult, when it is remembered that "a house fit in all respects" and the expression "reasonable expense" are capable of varying interpretations by local authorities, their officers, Ministry of Health, courts and owners of private properties.

The difficulties and the frustrations experienced call however for an intensified effort in order to achieve the following aims:—

- (i) The provision of a separate dwelling for every family which desires to have one.
- (ii) The eradication of every unfit house whether by rehabilitation or demolition; and
- (iii) The abatement of overcrowding.

HOUSING STATISTICS

Number of new dwelling houses erected during the year 222.

Action under Statutory Powers during the year:—

- (a) Proceedings under Section 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936:—
 - (1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs (informal notices) 15
 - (2) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which formal notices were served requiring repairs —
 - (3) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of notices:—
 - (a) By owners 15
 - (b) By Local Authority in default of owners —
- (b) Proceedings under Section 11, 12 & 13 of the Housing Act, 1936:—
 - (1) Number of dwelling houses dealt with under Section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936 39
 - (2) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which demolition orders were made 8
 - (3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which closing orders were made 10
 - (4) Number of dwelling houses of which the Council have accepted undertakings from the owners 2
 - (5) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of demolition orders 1
 - (6) Number of dwelling houses repaired as a result of undertakings given by owners 1

Housing Act 1936—Part IV: Overcrowding:—

- (a) (1) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year 136
- (2) Number of persons dwelling therein 763
- (b) Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year 48
- (c) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year 17

MILK SUPPLIES

The Food and Drugs (Milk and Dairies) Act, 1944 came into operation on October 1st, 1949, resulting in the transfer of responsibility for the control of milk production from local authorities to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

At the same time new regulations relating to milk and dairies and designated milk, (raw and heat treated), were introduced replacing the Milk and Dairies Order 1926 and the various Milk (Special Designations) Regula-

tions which have appeared from 1936 onwards. Operation of the new Act and Regulations in so far as they relate to the distribution of milk, still remains the responsibility of the local authority.

Under the old statutes the local authority had no right to refuse registration. The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries can now refuse registration or cancel an existing registration if he is satisfied that the regulations cannot be complied with, having regard to the conditions existing at the premises concerned.

A true comparison between the results obtained under the new arrangements and those obtained when the work was in the hands of the local authorities, is therefore not possible as the powers granted by Parliament to the Minister of Agriculture are so much greater than those formerly enjoyed by the local authorities.

Visits to cowsheds	377
New cowsheds erected	4
Improvements to cowsheds	7
(floors, drainage, improved lighting and ventilation)	

61 informal notices were served during the year and 54 were complied with. In the remaining 7 cases, 3 notices were partly complied with.

4 applications for registration under the Milk and Dairies Order 1926, were received and all were granted.

Licences issued by your Council under the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations were as follows:—

Dealers licences authorising the use of the special designation	
“Tuberculin Tested”	9
Bottling licences authorising the use of the special designation	
“Tuberculin Tested”	5
Supplementary licences to use the special designation “Pasteurised” ...	1

CAFES, RESTAURANTS, ETC.

Hygienic handling of food has been regarded of primary importance, and food premises visited accordingly, in order to stimulate interest in this matter. Particular attention has been paid to the conditions existing in the kitchens with a view to securing a high degree of cleanliness. Where necessary, occupiers of food premises have been requested to provide a good supply of hot and cold water, soap, clean towels and washbasins. Attention has also been directed to the necessity for food handlers to wear clean clothing and for cultivation of clean personal habits. Work carried out as a result of visits is summarised below:—

Food rooms redecorated	7
” ” repaired (floors, walls, ceilings, windows)	11
Wash basins provided	3
New sanitary accommodation provided	2
Provision of constant hot water supply to washbasins	2
Rodent infestations dealt with	4

MEAT INSPECTION

No change has been made in the slaughtering arrangements. The home-killed meat allocated for the Wycombe Rural Area continues to be sent from a slaughterhouse situated in an adjoining Authority's area. With regard to imported meat, individual butchers have from time to time complained about the condition of the meat received. When inspected the carcasses concerned were found to be of poor quality and not diseased or unsound. This question of quality with respect to imported meat has been the subject of representation by the trade itself to the Ministry of Food.

Certain private slaughterhouses in your Council's area have been re-licensed in order to assist in the Ministry of Food's scheme of pig killing

for self suppliers. Occupiers of these premises have been encouraged to notify the local authority when killing occurs and the animals slaughtered are then inspected.

Number of slaughterhouses licensed 9
 „ „ slaughtermens licences issued 25

ICE CREAM (HEAT TREATMENT ETC.) REGULATIONS 1947

Four occupiers of shops, manufacture and sell ice-cream at their premises. The remaining 33 retailers obtain ice-cream already wrapped, and in each case the ice-cream is stored in a refrigerator prior to sale.

Routine sampling of ice-cream has been carried out in order to determine the cleanliness of the food-stuff offered for sale. The methylene blue test employed in the examination of the ice-cream has resulted in the samples, which were submitted for examination, being classified in accordance with the Minister of Health's recommended scheme for the grading of ice-cream.

The results obtained may be regarded as satisfactory and were as follows:—

Number of Samples	Grading
32	Grade 1
14	„ 2
4	„ 3
—	„ 4

During the year eight new applications were received in connection with the registration of premises for the sale of ice cream. All were granted.

BAKEHOUSES

Routine visits have been made and satisfactory standards of food hygiene found to obtain.

There has been no change in the number of bakehouses on your Council's register.

FOOD CONDEMNED

English Beef:

Hindquarter 247 lbs. (Bone taint and decomposition)
 67½ lbs. (badly bruised)
 Forequarter 52½ lbs. (Badly bruised)
 Ox Kidney 18½ lbs. (absess)

Imported Beef 275 lbs. (bone taint)

Danish bacon	5 lbs.
Dutch Brawn	48 „
Imported Eggs	3½ doz.
Wet Fish	70 lbs.
Soft Cheese	14 „
Corned Beef	136½ „
„ Mutton	12 „
Canned Rabbit	46 lbs.
„ Tongue	6 „
„ Salmon	1½ „
„ Sardines	½ lb.
„ Carrot	12½ „
„ Tomatoes	14½ „
„ Peas	21½ „
„ Beans	19½ „
„ Beetroot	8 „
„ Apricots	6¼ „
„ Plums	7 „
„ Grapefruit	5 „
„ Damsons	3 „
„ Evaporated Milk	54 „
„ Condensed Milk	9½ „
„ Soup	8 „
Margarine	16 „
Dried Apricots	93 „

WATER SUPPLIES

During the year 96 samples of water were collected and submitted either for bacteriological or chemical examination. In the few remaining hamlets without a main water supply, sampling of water from private house wells and rain water tanks was intensified. Reports received showed that, with but few exceptions, the water in the shallow wells was unwholesome. Your Council, acting upon this information, have proceeded with arrangements whereby a main water supply will be extended to the hamlets of Meadle and Owlswick.

In other parts of the district served with water mains, well and rain water tank water has been sampled in connection with houses not connected to a main water supply. Where the water has been found to be contaminated owners of the properties concerned have been requested to lay on a main water supply. In most cases the owners have responded to an informal notice and the service of statutory notices in these cases, has therefore, not been necessary.

Samples of water submitted for bacteriological examination	96
" " " " chemical examination	10
Samples of water found to be contaminated	74
Houses connected to public water mains	78

RODENT CONTROL

Your Council have continued to avail themselves of the services of the county agricultural committee's pest control department in order to deal with infestations within the area. Operating on this basis has resulted in a remote control on the part of your authority with consequent unsatisfactory features.

The policy of not charging the occupiers of private dwellings for disinfestation services, has inevitably brought about an increasing number of notifications with respect to infestation of premises.

During the year 127 houses, which were the subject of rat and mice infestations, have been successfully treated.

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS

The continued shortage of housing accommodation has resulted in an increase in the number of applications for licensees in order to permit moveable dwellings to be stationed and used.

The applications have been dealt with as follows:

Number of licensees issued	48
Number of licensees refused	3

In one case your Council had to resort to the institution of legal proceedings in order to enforce the clearance of earavans' from a site. This action was successful.

RAG FLOCK ACTS

Several visits were made to upholsterers' premises. It was found that material other than flock was largely used for filling purposes.

At the few firms where flock was used, samples were taken and the analyst's report showed that the samples conformed to a satisfactory standard of cleanliness. In all cases the flock used was guaranteed clean and a warranty given to that effect by the firms supplying same.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937 and 1948

Annual Report for the year 1949 for the Rural District of Wycombe, in the County of Buckinghamshire, on the administration of the Factories Act, 1937.

1. INSPECTIONS MADE FOR PROVISIONS AS TO HEALTH

Premises.	Number on Register.	Number of		
		Inspec- tions.	Written Notices.	Occupiers Prosecuted.
(1) Factories in which Sec. 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	19	33	3	—
(2) Factories not included in (1) in which Sec. 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	131	194	21	—
(3) Other Premises in which Sec. 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	—	—	—	—
Total	150	227	24	—

2. CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found.				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted.
	Found.	Remedied.	To H.M. Inspector.	By H.M. Inspector.	
Want of Cleanliness	2	2	—	—	—
Overcrowding	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature ...	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors	1	1	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences—					
(a) Insufficient	7	7	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	11	9	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	5	4	—	1	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork) ...	—	—	—	—	—
Total	26	23	—	1	—

OUTWORK

(Sections 110 and 111)

Nature of Work.	Section 110.			Section 111.		
	No. of out workers in August list required by Sect. 110(1)(c).	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council.	No. of Prosecutions. for failure to supply lists.	No. of instances of work in un-wholesome premises.	Notices served.	Prosecutions
Wearing apparel:						
Making, etc. ...	94	—	—			
Cleaning and washing ...	—	—	—			
Housing linen ...	—	—	—			
Lace, lace curtains and nets	16	—	—			
Total	110	—	—	—	—	—

RAINFALL, 1949

Prof. Geo. E. Gask, "Hatchmans," Hambleden, has again favoured me with particulars of recorded rainfall during the year ended 31st December, 1949.

Rainfall recorded at Hambleden

Station : 185 feet above sea level.

Month.	Annual Rainfall.	No. of days on which rain fell with .01 or more measured.	Largest Rainfall.	
			Date.	Amount.
January	1.23	16	3rd	.30
February	2.67	7	8th	.55
March	1.91	8	5th	.90
April	1.39	10	21st	.40
May	2.72	15	23rd	.48
June	1.07	7	1st	.37
July	1.56	7	16th	.71
August	1.11	6	1st	.52
September	0.92	9	21st	.30
October	6.74	14	23rd	1.61
November	2.47	16	5th	.73
December	1.80	19	18th	.38
Totals ...	24.82	134		

